

The Aftermath by [fanficgirl395](#)

Category: Stranger Things, 2016

Genre: Family, Romance

Language: English

Characters: Eleven/Jane H., Lucas S., Max M., Mike W.

Status: In-Progress

Published: 2017-11-12 12:52:44

Updated: 2018-10-29 16:58:07

Packaged: 2019-12-12 23:00:56

Rating: T

Chapters: 5

Words: 12,534

Publisher: www.fanfiction.net

Summary: This is set after season 2 of stranger things shortly after the snowball. This is the process of how things are starting to go back to normal and how Eleven and everyone else is dealing with the aftermath. A lot of romance and cute moment and of Dad Hopper too. And just some pure fluff. Rated T just in case. P.S. I don't own stranger things or any of the characters or eggo waffles.

1. Chapter 1

A/N: I know I still have my other fanfiction I'm working on but I couldn't resist writing a stranger things fanfiction. Anyway's This is going to be multi-chapter and I am very slow at updating and they're rather inconsistent so if you have a problem with that then don't read it, it's as simple as that. There is going to be a lot of romance with Mileven, Lumax, Jancy, and Jopper. I don't know when I'll be posting next and my updates are rather inconsistent. I can post in a few days or a few weeks it just depends on what I have going on and what I have happening. But I will say this; I started writing this fanfiction on November 10, 2017. So you can have an Idea of how long it takes me to write this chapter. Anyways enjoy reading!

Nancy, Mike, and Eleven were in El's bedroom working on painting the wall. Hopper had decided that Eleven was going to live with him and he was going to be raising her. They had decided that they will live in the cabin in the woods. It was small but Eleven liked it and it was big enough for both of them to live in with two bedrooms, a small but working kitchen, a small bathroom with a shower, living room and plenty of storage space.

El was finally getting to make her room her own and Nancy was helping decorate and paint. El decided that she liked more of the pastel colors to brighten up her room. So, they were painting it a light pastel purple.

"How do you want to decorate your room El?" Nancy said trying to think of decorations and ideas to make El's room the way she wants it. Eleven was more girly like Nancy so Nancy was a huge help when it came to this stuff. Nancy and Joyce had bought her more clothes and though El did like her more punk style she'd come to realize that she liked the girly styles a little more. With brighter colors and clothes, purple was one of her new favorite colors.

"I don't know. I do like the purple though. I also like the lights that are on people's houses when Hopper lets me ride in the car with him. Could we put some of those up?" El asked.

She would go places with Hopper for simple things like going to Joyce's house or the store, which was a good way to teach her how money worked. But he still wouldn't let her go out much and obviously not by herself. They had covered up her gifts pretty well but Hopper didn't want to risk it too much because he wasn't sure if Dr. Brennan was really dead or not. Though all the files he got from Dr. Owens said he had died from some sort of government project gone wrong. But when Eleven was telling him what happened while she was gone with her sister, he wasn't too sure about her safety anymore.

Dr. Owens had been trying his best to help Eleven live a normal life. All he wanted was to help people. And even though he wasn't a scientist at Hawkin's lab, he figured it was the right thing to do and he wanted to help her. So, now she has a legal name and family and though Hopper hasn't told her quite yet that he is legally her daughter, they've grown a strong Father-Daughter relationship.

"Do you mean the Christmas lights?" Mike asked her smiling.

She looked confused for a moment and thought about what Mike had just said and started shaking her head.

"Yes if that's what they're called," she said

"Of course we can hang Christmas lights in here," Nancy said smiling, excited to do more decorating.

"What is Christmas?" asked El, "I mean I have heard of it but I don't know what it is." Eleven was a little confused. She knew it was an important holiday but she wasn't sure when it was or how people celebrated it. She had celebrated Thanksgiving after Joyce taught her all about the pilgrims and the Native Americans. Joyce said that Thanksgiving was always celebrated on the fourth Thursday of the month of November. Joyce had been tutoring Eleven since about a week after she had closed the gate. Eleven loved learning new things and she caught on to her lessons really quickly. She was good at it and Joyce loved spending time with her. Joyce would tutor her from about 8 am to 3 pm just like the boy's school. Hopper was glad she was learning quickly because he wanted to put her in school with the boys for their high school years. He had hoped that if they could

continue working on teaching El she would get a good grade on the placement test to start high school in the fall of 1985. She was very curious what school was like. She would always ask Mike and he would do the best he could to explain it to her.

"You've never celebrated Christmas before?" Nancy asked as she was working on painting the rest of the wall she was working on.

They were almost finished painting the room and El was really excited to see it all finished.

Eleven shook her head no and looked down at the ground and seemed very sad. "I don't think so," She said softly.

Her "Papa" of course never celebrated it with her. He was nothing like a father and he only wanted her to experiment on. Dr. Brannan was evil and cruel and they try not to mention him at all and especially not in front of Eleven who still has nightmares and flashbacks to the lab and the time she spent with "Papa" there. She was trapped in that lab for 13 years and was tortured and abused all in "the name of science" (or at least that would be the argument that the people who worked in the lab would give).

"Guess it was after Christmas that Hopper found you," Nancy said more to herself than anyone else.

"What do people do for Christmas?" El asked curiously looking at Mike who was smiling. Mike always smiled around El and he always wanted to be with her. Eleven was the same way. She always smiled when she looked at Mike and she never wanted to leave him for as long as she did before. 353 days was enough time apart and they didn't need anymore. So, Mike tried to come over as often as possible. They were finally together and that's all they wanted.

"Well, people try to give presents to the other people they care about. They also set up a Christmas tree with lights and ornaments and stuff like that," Mike tried to explain what people do but then Eleven had more questions.

"What're Christmas ornaments?" she asked Mike. Mike wasn't that great at explaining things, so, he just said, "Well, I'm sure Hopper will

get a Christmas tree and ornaments for you guys soon, and if he doesn't I know Joyce will," Mike said

"Can you put up a Christmas tree with us?" El said starting to get very excited about this Christmas stuff.

"Yeah, I mean if Hopper is okay with it," Mike said to her.

"I'm sure he will be," Nancy said. Eleven's smile got bigger (if that was even possible).

Shortly after that, Hopper came home. He had the keys to the door and fiddled with the lock trying to open it. He only had one free hand because he had some stuff in the other. Hopper decided that he would rather use a key than the secret knock. That way he could give one to Joyce and she could come there whenever without having to remember the secret knock. He also gave one to Nancy because he didn't want to give one to Mike. Hopper didn't want Mike and El to ever be alone together but El wanted to be able to see Mike as much as possible. So that was their compromise. And El wasn't allowed to open the door for anybody if they knocked on the door. He finally got it open lugging in bags of groceries. He was late but El didn't mind because she hadn't been alone. I was about 6 o'clock and it was already dark out. Hopper put the bags of groceries on the counter in the kitchen and he said "I bought ice cream! You guys want some or should I eat it all myself." It didn't take long for El and Mike to come up to him and ask "where's the Ice cream?"

"It's in the grocery bag," Hopper answered. They went to the grocery bag and pulled out the chocolate ice cream. El grabbed a spoon to scoop the ice cream with and got out a bowl. Mike and El decided to share a bowl because it uses fewer dishes and it was kind of adorable. Plus El had to do the dishes and she didn't want to wash too many dishes so it helped.

Though Hopper didn't like it much. He was beginning to worry how close Mike was getting to Eleven. He wasn't sure why he was so worried... He trusted Mike and knew that he wouldn't do anything to hurt El. But perhaps it was more that he didn't want to lose her. He had just adopted her legally. He couldn't lose her so quickly. He loved her and didn't want to leave. She was already 13 so it wasn't

like he had much longer with her. Five years and she'd be leaving to go to college or do something else. As Hopper sat there watching El and Mike together he decided that even though he had only a few years with her he was going to do the best he could to make sure she had what she needed and felt the love she never got in that lab. He wanted to be the best father to that little girl. The Father she never had but always needed. He was going to make her happy. Not just halfway happy but happy, happy.

He was drawn out of his thoughts when Nancy said, "You okay Hopp?" coming up behind surly noticing his stare as he was deep in thought.

"Yeah, I'm... perfect," he said smiling.

He walked over to the counter scooping up some ice cream for himself and sitting at the table next to Mike and El. Nancy soon came over to with a bowl of ice cream for herself.

"Hopper? Can we get a Christmas tree and decorate it with the pretty Christmas lights?" Eleven asked him as he was eating his Ice cream.

"Yeah, Joyce is coming over on Saturday and we're going to get a Christmas tree then. It was her idea. She said Will and Jonathan are coming too," Hopper replied.

"Can Mike come too?" She asked. He looked at her with grief in his eyes. He was hoping it could be some kind of family thing. But since Jonathan was coming, Hopper was guessing Nancy would too. And if Nancy was coming he really couldn't say no to Mike coming.

"Okay... that's fine," He replied. Eleven's face lit up with excitement. She was so happy. Seeing her happy made Hopper happy and she went to give him a hug. As Hopper was hugging her he kissed the top of her head.

"Thank You," she said so quietly that he could barely hear it. As he was letting go of her he thought, *My little girl is happy and I couldn't be happier. I have all I want now.* What Hopper didn't know was that she was thinking the same thing.

Everyone was happy, things are going great, and Eleven gets to live a somewhat normal life. Things were perfect and they wish they could be this way forever.

A/N: I hope you liked it! I don't know when the next chapter will be coming out but I just started writing it. I have few good Ideas for the next few chapter and I'm excited for you all to read them. I hope you enjoyed it and I promise I will include every main character in the show but I just wanted to start with this and yes I'm aware that Christmas isn't for another month. So I will wait a little while longer to make an actual full on Christmas chapter but I have some great ideas for Christmas. anyways I hope you enjoyed this and see you next time.

*Edited by the best person ever kalebbaul21

2. Chapter 2

A/N: First things first thanks for all your reviews, follows, and favorites. Secondly, I've started writing this chapter on November 13, 2017. I will tell you the day I start writing the chapters. It helps me keep track and that way you guys know how long it'll take me to write this chapter so you have an idea about how long it'll take for the next chapters. Thirdly this chapter is going to involve a lot of the other characters. In most of my stories i've had really long chapters but I think I want to make these shorter and just post more often. However, this chapter is longer than my previous chapter. I also started making outlines for each chapter so I have an idea of how I want them to go. Anyways, I hope you enjoy this chapter. So without further ado...

Will was running from what appeared to be some sort of monster in the upside down. He turned around and realized it was the mind flayer chasing him again. This can't be happening again, Will thought to himself in a frenzy. All of the sudden, every inch of him was covered in some sort of smoke. Was the monster using him again?

Then he woke up in a small room. His mom was lying next to him but she wasn't moving. He went to see if she was alive, but then he realized that she was covered in blood... and she was dead. Next to her was Bob who was also dead and covered in thick, red blood. Will then stood up and saw the dead corpses of all his friends surrounding him. All of them covered in the blood. He looked down at himself and saw that he too is drenched in the red blood. But this was not his own. Had he killed them all?

Will woke up screaming, and sweating in his bed when Joyce ran in to check on him.

"WILL! What's wrong?! Are you okay?!" She screamed running into his room and turning on the light. "Was it another nightmare?" She was rubbing his back as she hugged him. She had gotten used to this; Will waking up in the middle of the night, screaming and crying. It wasn't new. He had nightmares often. Everyone did. But Will and Eleven had them the most often. Eleven's nightmares were normally

about Papa and Will's were about the mind flayer.

"Mhm," was all Will could say. He looked at the clock on his nightstand next to the bed. It read 5:30 am.

"It's okay, it was just a nightmare, honey," Joyce said hugging Will who was still crying from his nightmare.

"I know, but it feels so real. It always does," Will said crying.

"I know it does, honey but it's all over. We don't have to worry about that thing or that place ever again," Joyce said trying to comfort her son. "Do you want me to make you some breakfast? I'll make you your favorite. You can get ready for school if you'd like."

Will just nodded his head yes. His crying seemed to have died down but he was still a little shaken up.

He got these nightmares a lot since he'd come back from the upside down but he was never really used to it. He was afraid that something might happen to him due to this he has been very alert and jumpy. All of his friends were the same way and Will thought it was up to him to keep them safe. Afterall, he believed he was the reason that all of this had happened after he came back, from the upside down.

Everyone in the party, except El who wasn't in school with them for obvious reasons, were in their homeroom with Mr. Clarke. They were just talking and waiting for the bell to ring signaling the beginning of first period.

"Mike, how's El doing?" Max asked whispering, knowing Mike had seen El yesterday. She also knew that he had been with her almost every day since she'd closed the gate. Max and El weren't very close. Eleven, for some reason, didn't like Max. But, Max didn't give up when Mike didn't like her and she certainly wasn't going to give up now that Eleven didn't like her. She still cared about El even though they rarely saw each other and El didn't like her much. Max didn't know why she didn't like her and it bothered her. She's only ever been nice to her. But, we all know that Max is as stubborn as a mule and she wasn't going to give up that easily.

"She's doing well. She misses all of you guys, though" Mike answered. Mike saw her way more often than any of them except for Will, who had become somewhat of a brother to her. He had also been with her almost every day after school due to the fact that his mom was there every day to help El. Hopper wanted to make sure nobody knew they were there except for the party, Joyce, Jonathan, Steve (he had become a big help since everything happened) and Nancy. Either way, he really didn't want a group of kids walking into a deep woods because that would seem suspicious. And he obviously didn't want anyone to think something suspicious was going on in those woods. So, only a few people were actually allowed to come to the cabin including Mike, Nancy, and the Byers family. But, only Nancy, Joyce and Hopper had keys to the cabin. So, when Mike asked if all of El's friends could come over to the cabin at the same time, he was worried. It took a long time but El and Mike had finally convinced him.

Mike continued with, "Oh yeah... Eleven and I were finally able to convince Chief Hopper to let you all come over today. Nancy will be there she has the key to the cabin and she could drive us there. So, are you guys in?" Then they all replied "Yeah!" directly following what Mike was saying.

They hadn't seen Eleven since the snowball which a was about two weeks ago. Even then, they only saw her for a little over an hour. The Party missed her and were excited to see her.

"Good. El owes me a hand shake, anyways," Max said laughing a little and smiling.

"Umm... yeah... you could try," Mike said to her awkwardly. He chuckled at the fact that Eleven didn't like Max much. So a handshake might not be possible. He had figured that she didn't want another girl around. Or maybe it had something to do with the fact that she was new. But, he would tell her stories with Max in them. She would just look upset or grimace at the name sometimes. And when it came to stories about things that happened between Max and Mike, he would get a sour look or she would say "Why do you care about her anyways?" and when Mike would ask her "what's wrong?" she'd simply say "nothing" or "I am fine." He would never get a direct answer. So, it was pretty clear to him and everyone she didn't like

Max at all.

"Well... I've been trying to be friends with her and it's clearly not working," Max said sounding a little exhausted and rolling her eyes. She was tired of people hating her for no reason. It was very common. First, her step brother hated her, but, he hated everyone so she didn't take that too it was Mike and now Eleven. She wanted... scratch that... needed to at least find out why she seems to hate her so much.

"She'll be friends with you eventually, Max," Lucas said. "We hated each other at first too. She just has trouble trusting people. I don't how she trusted Mike so quickly."

After that the first bell rang, it was time to start class. Max was thinking about the idea of Eleven's hatred toward her all day...

It was the end of the school day and the party was getting things out of their lockers. They had all agreed to go over to Mike's house where Nancy would drive them to the cabin. Lucas was walking up to Max wanting to ask her something. He had tried to ask her before and this was a really strange time to ask her. But he had just gotten the nerve up to finally ask her out on an actually date! Will had told him to just go for it and ask her. In the past he would go up to her and try to ask her but he'd chicken out at the last minute. He got flustered around her sometimes and he'd get butterflies. But other time he would be able to be himself and just talk to her about anything. He loved that she could make him feel that way. He really liked her and he thought that just maybe she liked him too, even though he was still nervous to ask her out or to be his girlfriend. They had been spending a lot more time together just the two of them but they hadn't had an official date or announced that they were an official couple yet.

What Lucas didn't know was that Max had been waiting for him to ask her out! She had considered asking him out a few times but she was starting to have her own doubts, considering it's been about two weeks since they kissed at the snowball and he hasn't asked her out yet. She was starting to wonder if kissing him at the dance was a little too direct. Max thought that he liked her and she still thinks that he does. She's just a little worried.

"Hey, Max," Lucas said a little nervously coming up to her locker as the rest of the gang went out the doors to go to their bikes.

Max smiled at Lucas and said "Hey, Lucas. What's up?"

Her smile made Lucas happy and fuzzy inside. He liked to see her smile and be happy. When Lucas was with Max he was always happy. She made him feel wonderful.

"Ummm... I actually wanted to ask you something," Lucas began, getting more and more nervous as Max's face lit up with hope.

"Yeah?" Max said smiling hoping that finally, he might ask her out.

"Would you like to... ummm... would you like to..." Lucas tried to ask her out but instead just said "Would you like to work with me on the science project." Lucas almost sounded defeated as he finished what he said. What if he asked her the wrong way or worse; what if she actually didn't like him. They did have a new science project so he figured it was a good cover up.

"Oh..." Max frowned with disappointment. "That's what you wanted to ask me?" she said looking at him with a stern look of anticipation. There was an awkward silence for a minute as Lucas and Max were thinking about what just happened "I guess I just thought..." Max said looking at the ground for minute thinking if she should say it or not "...Nevermind" she looked at him giving him a small smile "yeah sure I'll do the project with you,"

"Oh... Okay. We could work at my house on like... umm... Sunday or something?" Lucas said hesitantly. Max had been to his house before when they were hanging out and doing some other projects they were partners for. Now, whenever they had a partner project, they were partners. It wasn't really a question now. They've had a lot of projects because it was almost Christmas break and the teachers were wanting to pack everything in beforehand. So, the students have already had three projects. Luckily they were all due on different days. They had already finished their second project which was a history project due on Monday. Their science project was due Wednesday. They had to make a 3-D diagram of a cell and write what the organelle functions were and label all the organelles in the cell.

"Yeah, Sunday works," Max said smiling.

"Well... are you ready to go see El?" Lucas asked excitedly. He originally didn't get along with her but he became friends with her eventually. Maybe the same thing would happen with Max.

"Yeah, but I don't know if she's ready to see me," Max said to Lucas a little somber but moodily at the same time.

"It'll be fine. We didn't like each other much at first either but we're friends now. She just has trouble trusting people that aren't Mike. You have to gain her trust is all. We all had too." Lucas said to Max trying to make her feel better.

"Everyone except Mike apparently." she said quietly. Lucas just shook his head and said, "Yeah that's how it's always been,"

"I figured, they seem to be very close," Max said. She didn't know that they liked each other a lot or that they are practically head over heels for each other. She didn't see them kiss at the snowball. Only Will and Dustin saw. Lucas and Max were way too caught up in their own moment to worry about the others. So Max had no idea that Mike and El had a thing. Well, that's not completely true. She had been thinking that they had a thing ever since they reunited. It was just that a friend doesn't usually look at another friend like that. They were clearly more than friends, she just never had the confirmation yet.

"Are you guys coming!" Dustin said coming back into the school for a minute.

"Yeah." Lucas said turning around starting to walk out. He was stopped by Max who grabbed his hand to get his attention.

"Hey, Lucas... Thank you," she said graciously.

"For what?" Lucas said smiling and a little confused

There was a little bit of silence as Max was trying to figure out what to say exactly. Lucas liked to watch her think. He liked the way she pursed her lips just a little bit. It caused him to get butterflies which happened often when he was around her.

"For everything." she replied, "Telling me about what happened last year, even though I know the rest of the party didn't want you to, letting me in the party, for being there for me, helping me with El... Everything," Max said giving a shy soft smile.

"Okay, you're welcome," he said still smiling at her. As they were walking out of the school and up to the bike racks the rest of the party was standing there waiting while whistling and cheering. Max and Lucas were very confused until they looked down and noticed they were still holding hands. They released each other's grasp as both of their cheeks started going red. After a moment of awkward silence, they all got on their bikes except for Max who was riding her skateboard. She was ahead of Lucas and Will who were falling a little behind the rest of the party.

"Did you finally ask her?" asked Will, "You looked like you were getting along very well over there,"

"No, I couldn't! She's just so perfect. Why would she say yes to me?" Lucas answered whispering.

"Because she's totally into you. It's pretty clear." Will explained.

"Really? To who?" Lucas asked seeming pretty oblivious as to what is going on.

"Everybody except you apparently." Will answered. They then sped up to catch up with the rest of their friends. Lucas thought for a moment but then realized all of his friends were up in front of him. He sped off to join them and they all drove off to Mike's house before seeing El.

A/N: I hope you all enjoyed that! I know this was a bit longer than my first chapter but I hope you still enjoyed it. Thanks for reading and reviewing. And please review and favorite. Love ya all!

P.S. Sorry this took so long. My editor has been pretty busy but without him this would be a complete mess. You probably wouldn't be able to read it without being very confused as to what's going on. So big thanks to kalebbaul21 for all his hard

work and time he puts into editing this!

3. Chapter 3

A/N: I just wanted to thank you all for reviewing, favoriting, and following. I want to make the time clear in this story. It's been about a few weeks since the Snowball (I'm guessing the snowball was somewhere between the end of November or beginning of December). I did skip over Thanksgiving because I wanted to start the story shortly after the Snowball but not directly. But as of right now, Eleven doesn't like Max but Max is trying to be friendly with her. Christmas is about one and a half weeks away. The kids only have one more week of school before Christmas break. The gang hasn't been able to visit El all together yet. This is their first time since the gate closed. I started writing this chapter on November 30, 2017. I hope you enjoy it and don't forget to review, follow and favorite. Btw this is a really long chapter like 2x longer than usual so I hope you enjoy!

After the party got to Mike's, it didn't take long for Nancy to get her keys and bring all the kids to the cabin. They got to the cabin and Nancy knocked on the door with the secret knock just to let El and Joyce, who is normally there when Mike and Will get there after school, know that they are coming in. Then, Nancy unlocked the door and El came running up to them and gave Mike a big hug, almost knocking them all down. That was the way she'd greet Mike whenever he'd come over, which was quite often. But he loved it when she'd give him a hug like that as soon as he walked through the door.

"Hey, El," Mike said softly into her ear as they were in each other's embrace.

"We're here too, you know," said Dustin who was standing behind Mike. They both let go of each other and El smiled at everyone as they walked into the cabin. Well... she was smiling at everyone until she saw Max, who had happened to come in last. Clearly, El wasn't happy to see her.

"Hi, El," Max said, trying to be friendly despite the look El was giving her.

El just ignored her and went up to Dustin, Lucas, Will, and Nancy, giving them all hugs.

"I'm glad to see you all," El said cheerfully to all her friends. She hadn't seen them since the Snowball.

"Yeah, me too. We all are, even Max. How have you been?" Dustin asked El who had then looked at Max lamely, not really smiling but not giving her a death glare either. Max just gave a smile looking more annoyed than she had intended.

"I'm good, how are you guys?" El asked, getting a chorus of "good"s and "great"s from her friends.

"We brought movies, games, and music!" Will told her excitedly.

It didn't take long to put the VHS tape in to start watching *Star Wars*. They were all trying to get situated and comfortable on the couch. Mike had sat down on the couch more towards the middle trying to save room for El to sit next to him. She liked being closer to the end of the couch. He knew she liked being on the end of the couch so she could lean against the armrest. Max had already sat down next to Mike on the opposite side of him hoping Lucas would sit next to her, which he did. But El had decided she wanted to be in between Max and Mike.

"I want to sit there," El said in a surprisingly demanding voice. Mike was a little shocked because he knew she would rather sit on the other side. Not to mention it was by Max and she didn't like Max at all!

"Really? You want to sit there... by Max?" Mike questioned.

"Yeah, is there a problem with that?" El was being surprisingly moody, which was not like her. "Do you want to sit by Max?" She said in a sad, moody, firm and almost calm voice.

"No... you can sit there if you want. I just thought you'd rather sit on the other side," Mike finally answered after a seemingly long and awkward silence. "Go ahead and sit there if you want, El."

Mike scooted over to the end of the couch to make room for El to sit.

El shoved Max over too as she was sitting down causing Max to roll her eyes and look seriously annoyed. She quickly stopped and smiled at El. She just looked at Max with a glare. Then El used her powers to start the VHS tape.

El snuggled close to Mike being very affectionate and clingy. Mike was absolutely *not* complaining. He loved feeling so close to her. After not seeing her for 353 days, he never wanted to let her go, but unfortunately, that wasn't possible. So, he cherished every moment like this with her.

Soon enough, *Star Wars* was over and El wanted to do something more than just watch movies. So they all agreed to play *Monopoly*.

El was doing surprisingly well. It was her turn and she was trying to think about what to do. But, she was distracted by Max and Mike talking. Mike was laughing at something Max had said. El was wondering what was so funny and she was getting mad. However, she didn't know why she was getting so upset. Maybe it was just something about Max and Mike being together and laughing with each other that made her so upset.

"What's so funny?" she asked trying not to sound too mad.

"Nothing," Mike replied with a grin, "it was just something that happened at school today... between her and Lucas."

Mike noticed that she didn't seem very happy. El looked up at Lucas and Max and they both blushed looking at each other. It was silent for a while as El looked skeptically between Max and Mike. After a minute or two, Mike broke the silence.

"Are you okay, El?" Mike asked. He had one hand holding hers and his arm was around her shoulders. He had began rubbing her shoulder with his thumb softly trying to comfort her. Mike was very worried about her. He hated when she seemed upset. He really liked her... a lot... and he wanted the best for her.

"Yes, I'm fine," El said trying to hide how upset she really was. She seemed to convince everyone but Mike.

They continued playing monopoly. El was struggling a bit and Max kept trying to help her. But, of course, El wouldn't let her. Mike had kept agreeing with Max even when El wanted to do something different. Of course, she didn't like this either. She hated how much the two had in common. She also hated that they had very similar ideas when it came to this game.

El was on Boardwalk and she wasn't sure what to do.

"Well, are you going to buy Boardwalk or not?" Lucas asked her.

"I don't know. It's the most expensive one," El answered trying to think it through even though she was quite distracted. *Max and Mike have been getting along way to well.* She kept thinking to herself.

"You should get it..." said Max, "I mean it's more expensive, but, at least you'll get paid the most when people land on it," El didn't want any advice or help from Max. She just wanted her to leave and never come back. She stared at her with a look that could kill. There was a long silence. Mike was a little worried that El might try to do something to hurt her, even though she wouldn't normally. El just seemed a little... unusual today.

"I agree, it will help you," Mike said obviously. If he knew how El had felt, he would have probably never said he agreed with Max of all people. El looked at Mike, she didn't look mad but she didn't look happy either. She just looked kind of blank.

"I'm just not sure if that's a good choice... plus I *don't* need *her* help... and you don't have to always agree with her!" El told Mike a little louder than she had intended. She then let go of his hand upsettingly and stood up.

"Okay, El, seriously, what is your problem with me? I was just trying to help," Max said to her.

"Really? I don't know if you noticed but... I don't like you," El replied sassily.

Max rolled her eyes and said under her breath, "Believe me I know," then added out loud "Why? I don't remember doing anything to you

or *our* friends. So I really don't know why you hate me so much,"

Mike could see that things were getting pretty bad very quickly and didn't want anything bad to happen to Max and/or his friends. But most importantly, he didn't want anything bad to happen to El. So he said, "El? Can I talk to you for a minute?"

"Go ahead talk," El said kind of rudely. Then she said, "unless you'd rather talk to *her*," El had given Max a death glare; a look that Max was all too familiar with.

"What? No, I mean alone," Mike said, motioning her to her bedroom door since it was the only place where they could talk in private.

El thought for a moment. Then answered with a steadyng breath "Sure... Of course you can."

She seemed to be trying to calm herself down now. She had realized how awful she probably looked in front of her friends and decided that maybe she was being a bit too moody. She still wasn't sure why she was acting the way she was, but, she felt she was having a very hard time controlling it.

Mike and El went into her room and closed the door so they could talk without the others hearing.

"Okay El, what's wrong?" Mike asked her sounding very worried.

"I told you I'm fine," El answered trying, yet failing, to sound sincere.

"I know you El... I know you better than anyone else. You can't fool me. Remember friends don't lie... what's going on?"

El looked around the room a moment. They had finished painting it and decorating it. El now had shining white Christmas lights hanging in her room on her lavender purple walls with a couple of picture hanging up of her and her friends. Her eyes quickly landed on a picture she had on her nightstand, it was a framed picture of her and Mike at the Snowball dancing together. They seemed lost in the moment. Jonathan had taken the picture and neither of them knew he had taken it until Nancy had shown them a couple days later.

After a moment of silence, and El just looking at that picture and thinking, she just came out and said, "Do you like her?"

"Who? Max?" Mike questioned. El just nodded her head once with grief. "I mean yeah I like her. But she's just a friend." he finally answered.

"Do you want to be not just friends with her? Like, kiss her and stuff?" El asked very afraid of the answer that was about to come out of his mouth.

Mike's eyes went wide and it didn't take him more than a second to answer, "No, of course not. We are only friends and we will only ever be friends,"

"And are we only friends?" El asked looking into his eyes as if searching for an answer.

"I... I... mean... I... I... Don't want t... t... to be only friends," Mike stuttered timidly.

"What do you mean?"

Mike took a deep breath in. *It's now or never* he thought. "I really really like you El... and not just as a friend. I like you more than a friend. I want you to be my girlfriend,"

He had finally said it. He'd wanted to ask her to be his girlfriend since they first met, now he finally had.

Girlfriend. That was something El had heard on the TV. So she knew what it meant, but she didn't know how to be a girlfriend or why Mike even wanted her to be his girlfriend.

"Why?"

It was a small word but it was a meaningful one and even though El had a more extended vocabulary, it was a simple thing like that, that made Mike like her even more.

"Because I like you... I like everything about you El. You're beautiful... scratch that... gorgeous. You make me laugh and I can

never stop smiling around you. You're nice, kind, and you think of others before yourself. You're smart, and probably just about the coolest person in the world. *You* make me happy. Only *you* can make me feel the way I do around you. Not Max, not anyone. There's only *you*," These words rolled off of Mike's tongue so swiftly, so easily, it had to be true, right?

"But Max is so much prettier and smarter than I am. She understands how the world works and I've barely left this house. I feel like you'd be happier with a girl that can actually leave their house, go out to eat with, go to the big TV with you, go to school with you..."

El still didn't understand why Mike would choose her over someone like Max. Maybe that was part of the reason she hated her so much; because she could give him things El wouldn't be able to give in a million years. Things like a normal life. She didn't wake up from nightmares nearly every night and Max didn't have these abilities that El wishes she didn't have. She didn't have some government bad men after her. Oh no... and what would happen if El and Mike ever had a kid together? What if the government people found out about said child? There was a lot of stuff Mike would be missing out on if he stayed with her.

"Is this what everything's about? You're afraid you're going to lose me to Max? Are you jealous of Max?" Mike asks concerned and curious.

"Jealous?" El had heard this word before but didn't know what it meant.

"Like... when you want something someone else has or thinks they have. But *you* want it."

"Maybe a little jealous." El looked guilty and Mike just smiled and said, "Don't be... I want you. Not Max, or anyone else. Just you. It's only ever going to be you. I love you," He knew he did. He would do anything for her. She was the first person he thought of everyday, the first person he wanted to see everyday. He wanted to tell her everything, not only that, but he was the first person he worried about when something bad happened. Even if there were a bad storm the first thing he'd do is hope and pray she was okay. And he couldn't describe the feeling he gets around her. It's almost like the whole

world shifted when he was close to her.

"I love you too," El said. Now she knew what love meant. She felt it for a long time and didn't know what the word for it was. But now she finally knew the word for it and tell him how she really felt.

It didn't take long after that for them to lean in closer and close the gap between them. They kissed but this wasn't like the kisses before. No. This kiss felt different. It was longer, more passionate, full of love. It was the best kiss El and Mike ever had. A while later they broke the seal on their lips. They didn't know how long the kiss lasted. It felt like a lifetime. But at the same time, it felt short like it wasn't long enough. They both wished it could last for infinite lifetimes. They just stood there a while looking at each other and smiling the biggest smiles the ever smiled.

"I think I need to say sorry to Max... But this doesn't mean I trust her," said El with a snarl, "She's going to have to earn that. I just feel like I was overreacting and yelling at her too much." El sounded like she truly felt bad but she still wondered if Max had any feelings for Mike, and that made El nervous. She still wasn't totally sure that Mike wouldn't leave her for someone like Max. But as for now, friends don't lie, and Mike and El were more than friends.

They left the room and El went up to Max, and, before El could say anything, Max said, "Okay... I need to talk to you and you can't say no," as she dragged El back into her room. "I don't know what I did to make you so mad at me. All I've been trying to do is be friends with you but you just keep trying to ignore me or push me away or... I don't know... torture me... and I don't know what I did. A lot of people don't normally like but this is different I've been nothing but nice to you and you still hate me and..." Max was rambling on.

"MAX!" El shouted she had been trying to get her attention for a while. But now was the only time Max actually noticed.

"What?!"

"I'm sorry, okay? I was overreacting to something that was pointless, at least I hope it was."

El tried to apologize but she still wasn't sure if Max did or didn't like Mike. *I mean, who wouldn't? Mike is perfect, right?* El thought to herself "but I was wondering... if you like Mike?"

"Is that what this was all about, El? You were afraid I liked Mike and was going to try to steal him from you?" Max asked her sweetly.

"Well... yes. I mean he's perfect. Who wouldn't fall in love with him?" El said dreamily.

Max just started laughing. El was confused. She hadn't said anything funny, at least she wasn't trying to.

"You've got it bad, huh? Trust me, I'm *not* in love with Mike." Max said through a fit of laughter.

El was a little relieved but she was also confused. What did Max mean when she said 'you've got it bad'? After calming down a bit, Max said "I actually like someone else,"

"Who?" El puzzled. Max just smiled, looking down at the ground biting her bottom lip. She started blushing and tried to decide if she should tell El or not. She decided to tell her anyways.

"Lucas, actually," Max stated.

"You like Lucas?" El kind of started to laugh but kept it under control enough to say, "Why, Lucas?"

Max was looking around thinking of what she was going to say.

"Umm, he's definitely cute. He's so nice to me, too. He treats me so well. He told me everything about you and the upside down even though nobody else wanted him to. And he's really easy to talk to. Sometimes, I'll just start talking and not know why I told him something. He's a really good person. And he makes me a better person, if that makes any sense at all," Max just started talking and it all rolled off her tongue easily. "But he's impossible sometimes. I've been trying to get him to ask me out ever since the Snowball. It hasn't worked. I'm thinking I just might ask him myself." Max said with a little giggle.

"What's 'ask out'?" El asked. She had heard this before on TV, but she wasn't quite sure what it meant.

"Oh... it's like when you like someone a lot and you go on a date with them. You would go to the arcade, or movie, or out to eat, that type of stuff. And you would go just the two of you as a couple. It's something boyfriends and girlfriends do." Max explained trying to answer her question.

"Well... me and Mike are boyfriend and girlfriend now. So do we go out?" El was still confused.

"Yeah... kind of... I mean it's probably pretty hard for you guys to go out because you can't really leave this house. But, technically, yes, you guys do go out. A date can be just the two of you hanging out here and watching a movie or talking, or just being with each other." Max explained further.

"Oh, if that's true, then me and Mike have gone on a bunch of dates," El started smiling and giggling. She was so happy! She hadn't really thought about how much she loved him it until now... wow, she was majorly in love with Mike.

"Well... at least you get to date. I swear, I could tell Lucas to ask me out and he'd still be completely oblivious!" Max said in a kind of sad tone but also giggling.

"Maybe he's just nervous. You should see Mike when he's nervous. He gets all tongue twisted and sometimes says some really silly things. Like one time I was asking about why Hopper gets worried when we're alone together. He tried to explain, stuttering and saying some silly things like when a boy and girl are together, or something like that, and then couldn't say anything. But Hopper doesn't trust us alone and I still don't know why he doesn't trust us." El started laughing after she said this.

Max started laughing with her and then said, "I'll have to explain that to you later." Max had given El a wink and laughed a bit. Then said, "But, Lucas gets uncomfortable, too. Especially when I touch him. Like when I hold his hand or brush against him. Now, I get uncomfortable too sometimes but I swear he gets more

uncomfortable than I do because I only get uncomfortable if people see us holding hands. They sometimes start to like hoot and holler. Not a big PDA person I guess." Max said still laughing.

"What's PDA mean?" El asked.

"Public displays of affection, which means being all lovey-dovey with your boyfriend in front of other people or friends," Max answered.

"I like it when Mike is loving and sweet towards me. I like holding his hand and cuddling with him on the couch and kissing him... I don't see what the difference is in front of other people." El said with a warm feeling in her stomach. They had stopped laughing now and El sounded more confused.

"Yeah, but some people aren't as comfortable with it as you, I guess. Anyways we should probably get back to the boys before they get too lonely without us," Max said giggling again, "They might turn back into nerds without us..." Max said jokingly

"Okay... Hey, Max, I like talking to you. And I'm sorry for everything I did to you out jealousy or whatever it was. You can be friends with Mike but nothing more, got it?" El laughed.

"Got it, are we friends then?" Max asked.

"Yes, friends," El answered sweetly.

"Well good, I would like to be your friend." Then Max and El hugged each other as the both apologized one more time for acting out on each other. They walked out laughing and getting a long and the boys all wondered how it happened so quickly. But after that, the girls were practically inseparable the rest of the day. They had truly became best friends rather quickly

A/N: Well that was cute. My plan is to have Max have a secret and slightly girly side but it's NOT going to be all bright, colorful, pretty dresses (actually there will be no dresses because Max would never under any circumstances wear a dress), fluffy unicorns, and rainbows. I just mean I'm going to make her maybe a little more giddy, but not annoyingly so. And

just like every girl, she gets nervous around boys and obviously wants a boy, a certain boy, Lucas Sinclair to like her back. Now she's still going to be the badass Max that would hurt Billy if he tried to hurt someone she cared about. So I personally don't think she's really going to be out of character. I'm just simply adding to her character. But if it does get out of hand please let me know. I will try to stay true to the characters as much as possible. So, please favorite and review.

Thank you to all of you for reading my story and helping me make it better you're the best.

With lots of love 3 3,

Jocelyn and my editor Kaleb!

4. Chapter 4

A/N: Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays! Even though it's very late, I should say Happy New Year, too! That's crazy, it's already 2018! Yay only two more years until I graduate high school lol! Sorry it's taking so long to get these chapters posted. I have been busy with a lot of other things from school to family life. It's just been very busy and stressful. Anyway, I started writing this on December 28th and I'm getting it posted a month later. And yes, I know it's after Christmas but I have two more Christmas chapters I want to write not counting this one. So, enjoy this short chapter and I hope the next chapter will come out soon.

Joyce, Will, Jonathan, Nancy, and Mike were all at El and Hopper's house. It was finally time to put up the Christmas tree. They were going to go get a tree and at Christmas tree farm a while away from town.

"I don't understand why we have to get a Christmas tree at a different place. Aren't there plenty in the woods around the cabin?" El was questioning.

"Yeah, but they're either not the type of tree we want or they are way too big to put in your guys' house," Nancy explained.

They had been driving for about a half hour and most of the group was sleeping now. They were all tired because it was already after 8 and they still didn't have a Christmas tree. Hopper had gotten off of work and was a little late. He was still trying to cover up El being alive and he was trying to make sure she was safe. One thing was weird though; there had been reports of strange things happening around town, but, it wasn't anything El could do. The reports were of people seeing things that aren't there. They swear they saw something but it disappeared not too long after they saw it. Most people would pass it off like they're crazy but Hopper knew better. So, he'd been working on that as well. He hasn't told El yet and probably won't as long as it doesn't directly affect her.

Mike had fallen asleep on El's shoulder. El had looked at him to check and see if he was sleeping. Then she asked Nancy, "I talked to Max

about what a date was and she explained it to me. But, I was wondering, how are you supposed to act on a date? I want to do something nice for Mike. I know it's Christmas and you're supposed to give things to other people. I want to maybe plan one of these dates, that Max told me about, for Mike,"

It didn't take much more than a second for Hopper, who was driving, to nearly slam on the brakes.

"You are too young to date." Hopper said sternly.

"Why? Max is my age and she dates." El explained.

"Hopper she's 13. I think it's okay if she goes on a date. Especially with Mike. You know he's a good kid." Joyce said trying to reason with the chief.

"Yeah... but that still doesn't change the fact that she is only 13. She's not even in high school yet." Hopper returned seeming to get a little annoyed.

"You remember being a kid. If I recall, you were dating... what was her name... Chelsea. That's right, Chelsea Stevens. Weren't you two dating in the 7th grade?" Joyce said. She was trying to tap into his memories of when he was teen.

"Well... yeah... but that doesn't mean she can date. That was barely dating anyways."

"Well, if you dated when you were in 7th grade she should at least be able to date in 8th grade. She's young, and, obviously, in love. Let her plan a date. It's sweet." Joyce wasn't yelling even though she was upset. She was just stern about it, standing her ground.

"Love..." Hopper choked out."Love's a strong word, Joyce. I doubt she's in love." Hopper said, then looked at El in the rearview mirror and asked, "You're not in love, are you?" He asked this trying not to sound like he was pressuring her to answer. But, this was his daughter and he wanted to know.

"I love Mike." El stated plainly like it was the most obvious thing in the world.

"Do you know what love means?" he asked her.

"Yes. It's hard to explain though." She answered timidly not wanting to upset the chief. She felt like he was already a little frustrated. "It's like I always think about him and I feel special when I'm with him. And there's this feeling in the air whenever I'm around him. And... I don't know. Like I said it's hard to explain." El had continued her effort to explain her feelings to Hopper hoping it would make him feel better.

"Okay... so maybe you do love him..." Hopper said hesitantly, "Fine, you two can go out. Just be careful. And I need to talk to Mike."

"See, now that wasn't *that* hard!" Joyce said trying to assure him that it was a good choice. Hopper just looked over at Joyce and gave her a death glare. If looks could kill, Joyce would be six feet under by now!

"Thanks, Joyce." El said smiling. Hopper had to admit he did like to see her smile. And when he saw her smile, it certainly made him smile. So, maybe it was all worth it.

A/N: I know that was a very short chapter, especially compared to my other chapters. But I feel like it took forever to write this. Now instead of two Christmas chapters, there'll be like three, even though it's way after Christmas. But there is going to be another chapter at Hopper's house next, and it'll be the characters in this chapter decorating to the christmas tree. Then there'll be a chapter on actual Christmas Day. And I'm thinking of doing a Lumax chapter before the Christmas Day chapter. Anyway, I hope you enjoyed this short little chapter.

-Jocelyn and her editor Kaleb

5. Chapter 5

A/N: So, I'm back with the next part of the story. This is probably going to be a little shorter. I finally started writing this chapter on January 26th, 2018. Just warning you this is full of fluff and cheesiness! I hope you enjoy!

After looking for a Christmas tree for a while they found the perfect one. El had picked it out it was big but not too big and it had soft pine needles and looked full, it looked so full that it almost looked fluffy. After the drive back to Hopper and El's house they got there at about 9 pm. It was late but because almost everyone fell asleep in the car they were awake and ready to decorate the Christmas tree.

"You guys want to play Christmas music?" Joyce asked. El loved Christmas music. She heard it on the TV when they were playing a Christmas movie. Hopper then, after noticing how much she liked it pulled out some of his old Christmas records and played them for her.

"Yeah" Everyone replied in unison.

Hopper, Mike, Will, and Jonathan, they're bringing in the Christmas tree. Joyce Nancy and El were getting out the Christmas tree decorations. Joyce brought the Christmas lights considering she had more than she needed. She still had the Christmas lights she had gotten when she was looking for Will. So, she had given some to Mrs. Wheeler, Mrs. Sinclair, and now Hopper and El. If she was being honest she had given Hopper and El the best Christmas lights. And El loved her for it.

After a while of setting up the Christmas tree and put some light and Christmas ornaments on it, they were almost done. They had to put the star on top of the tree. And there were just a few more ornaments to put on the tree as well.

Hopper walked up to El with a little ornament in his hand.

"Hey, Kid," He said smiling handing her the little ornament, It was a sparkling snowman. El thought it was really pretty. The snowman wore a little top hat. Had two button eyes and a carrot for the nose. "I

want you to put this on the tree. It's really special to me," He told her.

"Why?" El asked curiously.

"It was someone's that was very important to me and now I want you to have it," The chief had explained.

"Who's was it?" El asked

"I'll explain it to you later," Hopper answered. "Just go put it on the tree. Okay, Kid," He knew he'd probably start crying if he tried to explain it and it was hard for him to explain anyway. The ornament was given to Sara by her mother. After she had passed away. Her mother left and she didn't take any of Sara's stuff with her so Hopper still had some of it. At least the stuff he couldn't bring himself to throw away.

The ornament he gave El was given to Sara shortly before she was diagnosed with cancer. She loved that ornament. She had it with her at the hospital and it was obviously very important to her which made it important to Hopper.

"Okay," El said and she went up to the Christmas tree looking around for the perfect spot to put it. Eventually, she decided to put it in a spot close to the front of the tree in the middle.

They finally finished decorating the tree. But El and Nancy wanted to decorate the house as well and Joyce brought plenty of decorations so they all dug through the box she had brought over.

El pulled out a decoration that looked like a plant of some sort. It had little white berries on it and a ribbon attached to the leaves of it.

"What's this?" El asked mainly because it didn't look like something meant for Christmas. It was pretty but it just looked like a small plant to El.

"Oh look what El found, Mike," Will said teasingly. "It's the Mistletoe." Mike looked up and saw what El was holding. His face went red and he started to look nervous.

"What is a Mistletoe for?" El asked

"if you're under the mistletoe with someone you have to kiss them," Will said casually.

"Oh, Why? It looks like it's just a plant," El said confused.

"It's like a rule of Christmas," Will explained then smiled deviously and looked at Mike. "Hey Mike, you should go stand by El," Mike's face got more red. El was holding it up in the air. So if Mike were to go over there he'd be under the Mistletoe with El and everyone watching. Even if no one was paying attention to Mike and El except for Will it would still be a little awkward to kiss her in front of everyone there. Especially because if Hopper were to see them kissing he'd probably kill Mike.

"I'm not sure that's a good idea, Will," Mike says towards the chief of police. El notices and that reminded her of the conversation that Hopper and she had in the car.

"Right, Hopper said he needed to have a conversation with you, Mike. I don't know why. He just said 'I need to talk to Mike'" El explained using a deep voice trying to mimic Hopper.

Needless to say, Mike was getting kind of nervous now. *Why would Hopper want to talk to me? Mike thought to himself I guess Hopper is kind of like a father to her. Maybe he's just trying to protect. Like he did before.*

After El had defeated the Demogorgon everyone thought El was gone for good. Everyone, that is, except for Mike. Mike knew she was still out there he just didn't know where. He thought she was still trapped in the upside down and tried to talk to her with his super com every day for 353 days. He never gave up hope but when he found out Hopper had been hiding for nearly a whole year in the cabin in the woods he was very mad. Mike was upset with Hopper. After a while, he understood why the chief did what he did. All he was trying to do was protect her and Hopper thought that was the best way. Mike just wished Hopper trusted him enough to tell him where El was or at least that she was still alive and safe in this dimension, not some other horrifying one like the upside down.

"Maybe, you should be careful, Mike," Will admits.

"You think," Mike agreed.

After a little while Mike had gone up to El and helped her sort through the box Joyce brought over. They had eventually put up all the decoration and hung up the mistletoe hanging in the archway to the tiny kitchen. Mike had been trying to stay away from it because he knew that Hopper would not be happy and though he would never admit it Mike was kind of scared of him. But at this point, everyone was distracted so Mike quickly grabbed El's hands and guided her towards the archway. Before El could comprehend what was going on Mike crashed his lips onto hers. I took a second for El to understand what happened but as soon as she did she kissed him back and wrapped her arms around his neck pulling him closer to her. Mike had just wrapped his arms around her waist when they heard... "NO NO NO, hands and lips to yourselves," Hopper said getting between the two. Mike's face was getting really red now that everyone was staring at them.

"No kissing is allowed. And no hand holding and you must stay a least a foot apart," Hopper started listing some rules it seemed to be one of his favorite things to do.

"Come on Hopper we discussed this they're young and in love deal with it," Joyce says to him in a sweet voice. "Nope, not going to deal with it," Hopper said looking between Joyce and Mike and El. Then he looks directly in mikes eyes and says "One. Foot. Apart." After a minute Mike took a step back from El. Still quite embarrassed that everyone had seen them kiss and then got yelled at by Hopper.

Then it was El's turn to speak up "come on, Hopper he's not hurting me. It's actually really nice. I like it when he does that. What wrong with it?"

"Look, kid, you don't understand. You're still young. A lot goes into having a relationship and there's a lot I have to explain to you. It's stuff that you're not ready for," Hopper said.

"Hopper, it was just an innocent kiss," Joyce explained trying to get Hopper to understand there was nothing to worry about. She drags him into the kitchen area of his small cabin in the woods so they could talk without the kids hearing them

"Yeah it always starts like that," Hopper huffed.

"Hopper, what is this about? They're innocent children. I don't think anything else is happening between them," Joyce pleads with Hopper.

"It's... just that they are still young and I don't want El to get hurt,"

"I highly doubt Mike will hurt her. Look at them. He loves her. Does this have something to do with her growing up too fast, Hop?" Joyce says. Hopper's face confirms what she's asking.

"I just got her I don't want her to grow up already. She's only 13, I want her to my little girl forever," Hopper says looking sad. He wasn't acting like his usual self and Joyce understood why. He had always had a soft spot for children even if he seemed scary and intimidating at times.

Joyce looked at him with a sympathetic and understanding look.

"I understand it's hard to watch the children you love growing up. I have two boys who grow like weeds. But you have to let it happen. It's hard but it's how life goes on. But one day you're going to look at this beautiful girl you raised and be so proud of who she's become," Joyce started smiling and Hopper gives a sad but still a bit happy smile back at her.

"Fine, but this doesn't mean they're not going to have rules and I'm going to keep a close eye on them too," Hopper gave in again. *Man Joyce was good at this* he thought.

"Good and you should keep an eye on them you just need to back off a little bit,"

Joyce and hopper smile and head back over to the kids who were now in the living room dancing a bit to the music. Jonathan and Nancy are slow dancing to **Please come home for Christmas* by the Eagles. While everyone else is just singing very loudly and Mike is trying to get El to dance with him. She agrees and they start dancing. To there surprise Hopper doesn't start yelling at them.

Joyce pulls Will onto to "dance floor" and starts dancing with him and Hop pulls out the video Camera and videotapes them all have

fun.

A little while later they're all still dancing. Hopper walked over to where Joyce and Will are dancing and ask Will "May I cut in?" Will smile really big and shakes his head yes.

"Hi, Hop," Joyce smiles looking up at him.

"Hey Joyce, I wanted to thank you," Joyce looks at him quizzically. "For what?" she asks

"Everything. Helping me with El. Helping me with everything," Hopper says with a small smile.

Frank Sinatra's record **A Jolly Christmas from Frank Sinatra* was now playing *have yourself a merry little Christmas*.

"I just did what anybody would have done. It's no big deal,"

"It is though because I couldn't do this without you," Hopper says.

Joyce smiles at and lays her head on his shoulder and continues to dance with him.

It was already midnight and Joyce did realize how late it was until he saw the clock. She says "Wow, it already midnight we should leave," She reluctantly stops dancing with Hopper and gathers all their things and starts to head out of his house. Mike and El say goodbye and give each a small kiss without Hopper noticing and they all leave the small house after the kids were all in Joyce's car Hopper stopped her. "Hey, Joyce ummm... would you like to... ummm..." Joyce looked up at him a little confused he was stuttering over his word and was acting very unlike himself. He was trying to figure out how to ask her something but had trouble forming correct words he hasn't done this in a long time "Would you like to... do something for Christmas?" That wasn't what he wanted to ask her but it is the best he could do at this moment.

"Sure, you can come to my house in the evening. I'm making dinner we'll probably have ham and I have present for you and El. You guys can come at about 6 is that good?"

"Yeah, 6 will be fine. I'll see you later Joyce,"

"Bye Hop."

A/N:

***1) The Eagles sang this song in 1970. It's one of my favorite Christmas songs**

***2) This album first came out in 1957 and was later remastered in 1987. I figure you can't have old Christmas music and not had Frank Sinatra there;**

I'm so sorry it's bye nearly and a year since I last posted. But I feel like this is an appropriate time to post this because it's Winona Ryder's birthday today! Happy birthday Winona! I know she probably won't see this but I'll wish her a happy birthday anyway. I know you guys are probably mad at me because it's a long while. If you want to kill me, go for, I'll understand. Anyways, I'm really trying to work on/finish all my fanfiction. I also apologize for the grammatical error I didn't have an editor for this one and that's one of my weakest qualities. I love you all. Don't forget to like and review. Have a great day :)

With love as always 3,

Joce